

Khūru agreed to this. At night Khamer taking one of his sons with^{57x} him went and dug (a hole) in the field, and after giving him instructions he buried his son there and went home.

Then he took Khūru with him and they went to the field in which his son was buried. On arriving there they put their question (and Khamer said:) "O land, look and see whether I have got the larger share or Khūru." Khamer's son whom he had buried answered from below the ground: "No, Khūru has got too much." On this Khūru, being convinced, returned home. "For," said he, "the land said so too."

When Khūru had gone home, Khamer went off to the field to extract his son. He went to the place where he had been buried and opened it up. His son was not there. Then he called him by name, but he was not there. On ahead there came a call "Hallo!" He went forward and dug, but his son wasn't there. Again he called, and on ahead (the voice) called "Hallo!" Going on in this way it made him dig all through the field, but nowhere did he find his son.

After that he returned to his home. ¹⁴ home there were his six sons. Both they and Khamer, it is said, died and Khamer's land was left heirless. Khūru did not make use of it. It is said they brought in a man named Datu Sing and settled him on that land. In Hunza when it is necessary to go anywhere to fight, the^[57] descendants of Datu Sing carry the standard.

In Baltit there are at the present day the Khūrukuts descended from Khūru, and on Khamer's land there are the Datu Singkuts.

There is also the following story about Khamer's descendants^{57x}. There is an animal called the marmot. There are none in Hunza²⁵ but they are found in Misgār, above the Khān Wālī Fort, at Murkush.¹⁷³

22 Misgār — the intention is probably: "In the Misgar Valley, above the Khan Wālī Fort, at Murkush".

23 The Migtaka and the Kilik are passes above Murkush, leading over to the Tagdumbash Panir.

and also at the Mintaka, the Kilik and the Qarāchukur in the Tagdumbāsh. Again they occur on the Kashmir passes as far as Trāgbal. Now they say that Khamer's son after being buried turned into the marmot.

From ancient times they tell the story thus.

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I didn't see any water buffalo in Hunza itself, but they are to be found in the Gilgit area and therefore I suspect they are to be found, if not in the principality of Hunza, at least in close proximity. Well, if you find water buffalo, then there is sure to be the Mana or Lali bird. It's a medium sized bird that is very much like our cow bird. He perches right on the back of the water buffalo and works away like a woodpecker, picking out the insects that infest the water buffalo's leathery hide. Thus, he prevents serious injury and disease from spreading from the hide into the flesh of the animal. 136

This is just another one of the myriad of intricacies that follow in the paths of Mother Nature—how she seeks to balance things for the benefit of all. Here the bird finds a way and means of obtaining food and nourishment and the buffalo keeps healthy and everybody is happy!

Ibex are part and parcel of the Hunza scene. So are the ovis poli or mountain sheep which are actually quite scarce, but are found if one goes high enough into the mountains. The Hunzans call the ibex "markhors." I learned that "markhor" means "eater of snakes," for the ibex, which are actually goats, are known to the people of Hunza for this habit. This also indicates that snakes are found in Hunza. As a matter of fact, every now and then one hears or comes across a snake on the trail. When this happens on a narrow trail high up on a ledge and your horse rears on his hind legs, pawing with his fore . . . 'tis not conducive to a long and boring life! [825]

The Mir of Hunza is quite a hunter. He enjoys shooting and is a true sportsman. My friend, the P.A. at Gilgit, is also an ardent sportsman. Between them, they told me that they had bagged, at one time or another, crows, vultures, golden eagles, geese and ducks, pheasants (two kinds), chikoris (which are their partridge), 224 [643] 136